

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 388

Expressing the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense and the Federal Voting Assistance Program should take certain additional and timely measures to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their dependents are provided with reasonable information on how to register to vote and vote in the 2008 general elections.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 8, 2008

Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. HAYES, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, and Mr. HELLER of Nevada) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense and the Federal Voting Assistance Program should take certain additional and timely measures to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their dependents are provided with reasonable information on how to register to vote and vote in the 2008 general elections.

Whereas members of the Armed Forces and their dependents deserve every reasonable opportunity to participate in the

electoral process given their daily sacrifices to protect our liberty and freedom;

Whereas Congress enacted the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act in part to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their dependents are provided with sufficient information, opportunities, and balloting materials to foster their participation in Federal elections;

Whereas the Election Assistance Commission found that less than 17 percent of the 6 million citizens eligible under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act chose to participate in the 2006 general election;

Whereas the Election Assistance Commission further found that of the 48,600 Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act ballots that were not counted by States and local jurisdictions in the November 2006 elections, 70 percent were not counted due to incorrect or undeliverable addresses;

Whereas the Election Assistance Commission further found that more than 10 percent of all uncounted military and overseas absentee ballots were rejected because they were received past the required deadline;

Whereas the Election Assistance Commission further found that more effort needs to be made by the States and the Department of Defense to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their dependents and citizens living overseas are made fully aware of their voting rights;

Whereas the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Federal Voting Assistance Program are required to create and utilize a Federal Post Card Application that allows members of the Armed Forces

and their dependents to use a single application to register to vote and request an absentee ballot;

Whereas a survey conducted recently by the Inspector General for the Department of Defense analyzed the effectiveness of the Federal Voting Assistance Program during the 2006 general election, and found that only 40 percent of members of the Armed Forces received voting information from the military and only 33 percent were aware of the Federal Post Card Application;

Whereas in April 2008 the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness testified before the Committee on House Administration that the Department of Defense had not provided all members of the Armed Forces and their dependents with post card applications by the January 15, 2008, deadline, as required by Department policy, and that the Department has yet to comply with this requirement; and

Whereas many of Department of Defense's outreach efforts, including its Armed Forces Voter Week, are scheduled to occur 60 days before the November 2008 election, which may not provide members of the Armed Forces and their dependents with sufficient time to complete and return the Federal Post Card Applications: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—*

3 (1) it is in the interests of the United States to
 4 ensure that the Secretary of Defense and the Fed-
 5 eral Voting Assistance Program provide members of
 6 the Armed Forces and their dependents who are eli-

1 gible under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens
2 Absentee Voting Act with sufficient information re-
3 garding opportunities to register to vote and to re-
4 quest an absentee ballot for elections occurring in
5 2008, including the November 2008 general election;

6 (2) the Secretary of Defense and the Federal
7 Voting Assistance Program must, on a monthly
8 basis starting July 15, 2008, through the November
9 2008 general election, provide all eligible members of
10 the Armed Forces and their dependents with an
11 electronic reminder of the voter registration and ab-
12 sentee ballot process available under the Uniformed
13 and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, and, as
14 required by Department policy, provide all members
15 of the Armed Forces and their dependents with an
16 electronic or paper copy of the Federal Post Card
17 Application, along with sufficient instruction on
18 completing and returning the application to the ap-
19 propriate election official;

20 (3) State and local election officials should work
21 with the Federal Voting Assistance Program to de-
22 velop methods, consistent with privacy and security,
23 for obtaining updated addresses and contact infor-
24 mation, if possible, for any member of the Armed
25 Forces or dependent who has been identified by the

1 State or local election official as having an undeliver-
2 able ballot address;

3 (4) the Under Secretary of Defense for Per-
4 sonnel and Readiness should report to the Com-
5 mittee on House Administration of the House of
6 Representatives, the Committee on Rules and Ad-
7 ministration of the Senate, and the Committees on
8 Armed Services of the House of Representatives and
9 Senate not later than September 15, 2008, on the
10 efforts made by the Department of Defense to—

11 (A) educate members of the Armed Forces
12 on the process of voter registration and absen-
13 tee voting in the 2008 general election,

14 (B) provide all eligible members of the
15 Armed Forces and their dependents with the
16 Federal Post Card Application to register to
17 vote and cast absentee ballots in such election,
18 and

19 (C) cooperate effectively with State and
20 local election officials in their efforts to register
21 these individuals and distribute and collect their
22 absentee ballots;

23 (5) States must redouble their efforts to make
24 sure that local jurisdictions collect the mandated in-
25 formation for individuals who are eligible under the

1 Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting
2 Act, and should work in partnership with the Fed-
3 eral Government to develop best practices (including
4 the use of electronic means) for encouraging voting
5 participation among members of the Armed Forces
6 and their dependents and citizens living overseas;
7 and

8 (6) the Department of Defense, the Federal
9 Voting Assistance Program, the Election Assistance
10 Commission, and State governments should examine
11 recommendations made by the Election Assistance
12 Commission in its September 2007 survey findings
13 regarding the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Ab-
14 sentee Voting Act.

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